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Commission for Social Development
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10-21 February 2003
Item 3 (a) (iii) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: "National and international cooperation for social development": social responsibility of the private sector

Statement submitted by Franciscans International and International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, Economists Allied for Arms Reduction, Elizabeth Seton Federation, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, School Sisters of Notre Dame and Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2003/1.

** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

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Social responsibility of the private sector

"We ... resolve to develop strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organizations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication." (General Assembly resolution 55/2, United Nations Millennium Declaration, para. 20)

Bearing in mind the statement of resolve in the Millennium Declaration to develop strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society in pursuit of development and poverty eradication, and the agreed conclusions of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development regarding the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, the above-named non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and members of the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Social Development urge the Commission for Social Development to consider the following aspects of social responsibility of the private sector:

1. We believe that people who live in conditions of poverty must be involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of private-sector partnerships. Part of the design must include any necessary training they might need in order to negotiate as equal partners. At its thirty-seventh session the Commission for Social Development agreed that partnership should be based on shared goals, mutual respect and tolerance of different views, joint decision-making as appropriate, and joint commitment to the process. It also noted that partnership can be strengthened through mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of experiences, improved standards and feedback concerning service delivery.

2. Corporations involved in private sector partnerships must be accountable to all stakeholders, including employees, consumers, suppliers and community members, not just to their stockholders. As the Commission for Social Development noted at its thirty-seventh session, all actors involved in the provision and delivery of social services should be accountable to the users of the services.

3. Accountability should look at the "triple bottom line", comprising economic, social and environmental performance indicators, such as those developed by the Global Reporting Initiative. Performance indicators should offer a means whereby the organization can assess its own performance over time, make comparisons with other organizations involved in similar work and relate its performance to appropriate United Nations guidelines such as the Millennium development goals or the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

4. Economic performance indicators should include investment in human capital; donations to community, civil society and other groups; and development of non-core business infrastructure, such as schools or hospitals in the local community. The focus of economic indicators should be on how the economic status of the stakeholder changes as a consequence of corporate actions, not on the finances of the organization itself. Indicators must be designed to reflect the impact of corporate actions, especially on women and on all those who live in conditions of poverty.

5. Environmental performance indicators should be related to the broader ecological systems in which they operate, in order to address the ability of the local environment to absorb environmental changes. In addition to accountability in the sustainable use of energy, indicators should address the method by which production waste is treated, including composting, reuse, recycling, recovery, incineration and the use of landfills; and the percentage of the weight of products that is "reclaimable" by either recycling or reuse of the product materials or components. Specific indicators should address the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Helsinki, Sofia and Geneva Protocols to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution. In this International Year of Freshwater, it is particularly important to assess total water use, annual withdrawals of ground and surface water as a percentage of annual renewable quantity of water available, and water sources and related ecosystems significantly affected by the use of water.

6. Social performance indicators should be based on internationally recognized standards such as the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as on the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Indicators under labour practices should measure ways in which an organization goes beyond basic human rights expectations. Since social issues are not easily quantifiable, some of the social indicators will be qualitative measures of policies, procedures and management practices. Employee remuneration, working time and community impact are sector-specific and should be further addressed on a regional basis.

(a) Social performance indicators should assess the impact of corporate actions on the wider community, by including an explanation of procedures for identifying and engaging community stakeholders in dialogue; information on the percentage of profits used for community development; and descriptions of the policy, procedures and compliance mechanisms for addressing bribery and corruption as well as of political lobbying and contributions. Since community needs and impacts are often sector-specific, additional indicators in this area should be developed on a regional basis.

(b) Human rights indicators should show evidence of consideration of human rights impacts as part of investment and procurement decisions, including the selection and monitoring of suppliers and contractors; the number of employees trained in human rights policies and practices relevant to operations, as well as the type and average duration of training; a description of policies regarding freedom of association and the prevention of all forms of discrimination, child labour and forced and compulsory labour, including monitoring systems and procedures and programmes to address these issues; and a description of policies, guidelines and procedures to address the needs of indigenous people, and the share of operating revenues redistributed to local communities.

(c) Social performance indicators should also address employee benefits beyond those legally mandated; the percentage of employees covered by collective bargaining agreements; provisions for worker representation in decision-making; the proportion of employees covered by formal health and safety agreements; a description of policies or programmes on HIV/AIDS; average hours of training per year per employee; and the composition of senior management and corporate governance, including male/female ratios and other indicators of cultural diversity.

7. Monitoring and evaluation must include outside oversight, including by representatives of each stakeholder group, as well as of the United Nations. For example, education partnerships could be monitored by a committee appointed by the Commission for Social Development, including parents of school-aged children living in poverty, members of the Commission, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, educators and non-governmental organizations. In the case of partnerships for sustainable development, a committee appointed by the Commission on Sustainable Development that included people living in conditions of poverty in areas of environmental degradation, members of the Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme, business and civil society would be appropriate.

When people who live in conditions of poverty receive the necessary training and help design partnerships that take into account the social, environmental and economic impact of corporate actions, this will result in "strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organizations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication." (ibid.)

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Item 3 (b) (ii) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

Statement submitted by Foundation for the Rights of the Family, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

* * *

"We, heads of State and Government,

"Recognize the family as the basic unit of society, and acknowledge that it plays a key role in social development and as such should be strengthened, with attention to the rights, capabilities and responsibilities of its members. In different cultural, political and social systems various forms of family exist. It is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support".[1]

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

[1] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, para. 26 (h).

03-20277 (E) 280103

The tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

By designating 1994 as the International Year of the Family, the international community centred its attention on the enhancement of the family as the basis of society.

The Year served to underscore the pivotal role of families in the development process and their multifaceted role in mainstreaming the well-being of individual family members.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/124 of 17 December 1999, preparations are now under way for the celebration of the tenth anniversary in 2004. This upcoming event should stimulate forward-looking thinking concerning the family.

Furthermore, the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family should not be an isolated celebration. It should be the starting point for an in-depth follow-up analysis of what the family really means for society and why it should be protected and supported by appropriate laws and policies.

The family and social development

Families — in which most people live their lives — are basic social units of production and consumption and, as such, are at the heart of the economic process. Their needs are intimately connected with the objectives of socio-economic development and must be accounted for when establishing policies and priorities in this field.

The centrality of families to development issues has vast implications and structural connotations. A functional analysis therefore should be undertaken of the interaction and interrelationship existing between the family and the development process.

The lack of a clear understanding of the role of the family as an important partner in developmental policies and programmes would amount to neglecting a whole and fundamental intermediary network of the social fabric. By not adopting a family-centric view of social and economic development, a major productive source would be overlooked because of the failure to recognize that the provision of resources to families is an investment in human security.

In short, families should be seen as the central agents of social and economic development, because a series of interdependencies exist between the family and formal economies, as well as between the family and civil society, that need to be recognized if social development is to be effective, sustainable and equitable.

A declaration on the family

Societies worldwide recognize that the family has a number of social functions and responsibilities. In fact, families, historically and by definition, can be considered as the first private sector, with their adhering share of responsibilities which, in turn, should have their counterpart in certain rights.

The International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) implicitly recognized the rights of families alongside their functions.[2]

The Foundation for the Rights of the Family feels that a declaration on family responsibilities, functions and rights should be one of the aims of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

We therefore would suggest that an open-ended group be created within the Commission for Social Development to review and extract relevant provisions on the family from national laws, international instruments and existing draft declarations.

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[2] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex, chap. V.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: modalities for review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

Statement submitted by International Longevity Center, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

I. Background

1. In response to resolution 54/262 of 16 June 2000, the International Longevity Center took active part in the work of the Second World Assembly on Ageing. Its participation included an address by Dr. Robert N. Butler to the plenary and his participation in the high-level round tables convened by the Government of Spain. Additionally, the Center, with its partners in Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France and the Dominican Republic, organized many side events on critical issues, namely, the status of older women, health disparities and inequalities in longevity, rights of older persons, the role of the media and the training of health professionals.

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

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2. The Center was very pleased with the new thrust of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the increased focus on developing countries. Implementation of the Madrid Plan is indeed a daunting task, and all stakeholders should strive towards more and coordinated efforts to implement it despite competing demands on limited resources. The Centre is addressing recommendations contained in the Madrid Plan through the activities described below.

II. Post-Madrid activities of the International Longevity Center

3. In paragraphs 82 and 83, the Madrid Plan again stresses the need for training of care providers and health professionals to meet the needs of older persons. Massive increases in the number of older persons would intensify the critical shortages of trained personnel, especially academic geriatricians (educators) and gerontologists. The Center has completed a publication entitled "Panel report on preparing health-care professionals for longevity and population ageing", which contains recommendations of a panel convened in Madrid. It will be distributed to Governments and other stakeholders for initiating both specialized and basic training in geriatrics and gerontology for health-care providers at all levels. For this purpose, at the global level, the International Institute on Ageing in Malta should be strengthened to meet the increased needs of developing countries.

4. Another area of importance is education and communication to raise public awareness of the varied aspects of population ageing. The Center organized an Age Boom Academy in Madrid for journalists, and it was replicated in New York in November 2002. The Center is interested in expanding this activity to developing regions to promote awareness and implementation of the Madrid Plan.

III. Implementation and appraisal of the Madrid Plan

5. A deep concern among many stakeholders is that the Plan did not go far enough in laying down a road map for implementing and reviewing the progress made in the years ahead. It is therefore gratifying to note that the Commission for Social Development is addressing this issue during its present session, under agenda item 3. In our view, implementation and appraisal should be considered two sides of the same coin and can be conducted simultaneously, and countries can lay down the necessary tools and indicators in advance. To be effective and successful, the following observations are offered.

A. Baseline indicators and database

6. General experience shows that there is inadequate availability of data on the varied dimensions of population ageing; such data are a prerequisite for an assessment and formulation of policies and, later, for monitoring. Except for core demographic indicators, information on other aspects of ageing is nil or deficient at the national level. The availability of data, including on demographics, is nil at subnational levels. It is therefore of utmost importance to set up and develop national capacity to create a benchmark database and make it available to all stakeholders within and outside the Government. Without the appropriate statistics,

both implementation and appraisal will suffer. A beginning should therefore be made using the recent population and housing census to develop a community-wide database on ageing, and the Secretariat should provide substantive guidance, uniform standards and technical support to countries.

B. Implementation priorities

7. The Plan calls for 189 actions in the ageing field. It is not feasible (or necessary) for countries to implement each of these recommendations. In this respect, it is a welcome development that regional meetings are taking place to arrive at regional priorities and strategies for implementation. Such diverse implementation will have complex implications for review and appraisal, which should be taken into account in considering the modalities for appraisal. Ultimately, the countries will decide the priorities for implementing the Plan, and countries should therefore be encouraged to commit themselves to undertaking the necessary review under a common frame of reference.

8. In respect of priorities, threats to longevity are presented by infectious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, which have not been completely eradicated, and with the spread of HIV/AIDS. Additionally, there remain disparities in health and longevity among and within countries, and these should be addressed effectively. In countries and areas where infectious diseases have been controlled, further increases in longevity will depend on the control and treatment of non-communicable diseases, which will call for infrastructure development, use of advances in medicine and trained health personnel. For these reasons, the implementation of actions relating to advancing health and well-being into old age should receive top priority in the national and regional strategies for implementation of the Madrid Plan.

C. Contributions of non-governmental organizations

9. The existence of many non-governmental organizations active in the field augurs well for the successful implementation of the Plan. Their contributions to implementing the Madrid Plan should be greatly welcomed and dovetailed with actions undertaken by Governments through proper coordination mechanisms and participation in decision-making at all levels. Coordination and cooperation among non-governmental organizations is necessary also to avoid duplication and to make effective use of the limited funds available.

10. Similarly, the research efforts of institutions and academia in support of the implementation of the Madrid Plan should be encouraged and utilized increasingly in policy formulation by countries. Also, non-governmental organizations may be technically well placed and therefore may be entrusted with, or co-opted to undertake, the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan, which will also ensure an impartial and more rigorous approach to monitoring.

D. A new international agency — a "UNICEF" for older people

11. The International Longevity Center recommends the creation of a new international agency that would provide oversight, assistance and monitoring regarding implementation strategies. This new agency would be supported not only by Governments, but by industry, elements of civil society, such as unions, and all of us as individuals. Such a public/private partnership dedicated and funded by these partners is necessary to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

IV. Conclusions

12. In order to reap the full benefits of the valuable volunteer efforts of civil society, a close collaboration and partnership need to be forged among all stakeholders, particularly government agencies and non-governmental organizations active in the field. Therefore, it is suggested that countries explore ways of expanding partnerships with non-governmental organizations, as well as of developing permanent mechanisms that will achieve greater effectiveness. At the international level, and particularly in the United Nations Secretariat, it is suggested that focal points liaise with non-governmental organizations, with research institutions that are involved in studies on various aspects of population ageing, and with the private sector. In regard to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, it is important to provide technical assistance and to help build national capacity to enable data development, research and monitoring. Regional seminars may be needed to arrive at a common framework and modality for review and appraisal of the progress in implementation by countries. Additional resources and designated staff are necessary to make concerted efforts in promoting implementation. Without such an effort, many in civil society are concerned that the momentum generated by the Second World Assembly on Ageing could be lost.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

Statement submitted by Colombian Confederation of Non-Governmental Organizations, International Council of Women and International Federation of Business and Professional Women, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and Associated Country Women of the World, Baha'i International Community, Foundation for the Rights of the Family, International Confederation of Christian Family Movements, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Psychologists, International Council on Alcohol and Addictions, International Federation for Family Development, International Federation for Home Economics, International Kolping Society, Italian Centre of Solidarity, Pax Romana, Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture, SOS Kinderdorf International and World Movement of Mothers, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

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The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

* * *

We, the signatory international non-governmental organizations listed in the title above, in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council,

Recall that:

"As the family is recognized as a fundamental unit of society, efforts should be made to support, protect and strengthen it in agreement with each society's system of cultural values and in responding to the needs of its ageing members" (Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing, World Assembly on Ageing, August 1982),

Recognize

"... the crucial importance of families, intergenerational interdependence, solidarity and reciprocity for social development" (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Second World Assembly on Ageing, April 2002),

Recall that:

"Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice" (General Assembly resolution 55/2, United Nations Millennium Declaration, 8 September 2000),

"The family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened. It is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support. The primary responsibility for the protection, upbringing and development of children rests with the family. All institutions of society should respect children's rights and secure their well-being and render appropriate assistance to parents, families, legal guardians and other caregivers ..." ("A world fit for children", Declaration of the special session of the General Assembly on children, May 2002),

The family is a sensitive issue in every society, the first and the most important socializing institution, where shelter and security are to be found when facing difficulties in life. Families exist in all cultures in different patterns, and in each culture they represent a major, even an essential, component in the life of individuals. The presence of the family is a prerequisite for the growth of children and youth, just as its absence is often the cause of a destabilizing void,

The family is recognized as an economic structure that intersects with the larger social and economic system,

Changes in the functions, responsibilities and structures of families during a process of development depend not only upon their background or their life cycle but also upon their interaction with new environmental pressures, values and behaviours. It is these elements that shape families' perceptions of their own resources and requirements and of the modifications they may make in their own value system and behaviour,

The way the family undergoes transformations in its formation, structure, functions and roles is an indicator of change in the structure of society as a whole,

Development programmes and activities usually adequately take into account the family as a unit or are intended to benefit families. An enormous number of development policies, however, affect this social group in both positive and negative ways. While development should mean the enrichment of life, in certain parts of the world the development process impinges negatively on families,

The failure to take a family-focused approach to national and international cooperation for social development might have the consequence of losing a whole sphere of partners directly involved in the intricate day-to-day problems affecting society.

We, therefore,

Urge that the wide range of problems confronting the family requires that families, rather than being ignored by the development process, should be taken into account by all who have responsibility for development activities and decisions;

Suggest that the first step in seeking to provide support for the family is to have as clear an understanding as possible of how the strengths of families are affected by the development process;

Underline the fact that the situation of the ageing, children, disabled and other vulnerable groups should be addressed holistically by both Governments and the United Nations from the family perspective. The family institution has to be strengthened to cope with many destabilizing factors in society and the rapid social and economic changes of the social development and globalization process;

Recommend that caring for the elderly and family members who are ill should be shared and supported by the family and society as a whole.

In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/7 of 22 July 1996, the follow-up to the International Year of the Family has been an integral part of the agenda of the multi-year programme of work of the Commission for Social Development for a number of years.

We, hence,

Hope that this tenth anniversary will re-emphasize the permanence of family issues in the work and programmes of the Commission for Social Development and, most of all, that it will bring about a change in attitudes and policies, at the level of Governments, the United Nations and civil society, towards the family and what it represents as the fundamental cornerstone of society.

We also note, in this regard, that family-related provisions of the outcome of the United Nations summits and conferences of the 1990s and their follow-up process continue to provide good policy guidance.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: modalities for review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

* * *

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is pleased to have this opportunity to address the Commission for Social Development at its first session since the Second World Assembly on Ageing and as the newly appointed entity responsible for the follow-up and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002 (see A/CONF.197/9). We look forward to participation at this session as the Commission commences discussions on how to integrate the different dimensions of population ageing in its work, in addition to discussion of modalities of reviews and appraisals at this forty-first session as stated in the Plan.

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

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AARP commends the United Nations and the Member States in advancing the global ageing agenda through the work of the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the adopted Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 and the Political Declaration (ibid.). We also commend the regional commissions for the timely follow-up to the Assembly, and the regional implementation strategies that have been adopted thus far.

To achieve a society for all ages, AARP supports the call for sound and measurable policies on global ageing and implementation of the Plan and all regional strategies. We believe the Plan and regional strategies embody commitments and recommendations for tangible improvements for older persons, while promoting a positive portrayal of older persons within society. AARP supports the Plan and the regional strategies' commitments to protect pensions; promote economic growth and the expansion of the older labour market; improve the health and well-being of ageing populations; encourage lifelong learning; ensure full integration and participation of older people in society; and promote intergenerational approaches to tackle the challenges of ageing populations, including support for caregivers.

However, AARP is strongly disappointed in the lack of specific implementation methods, time-bound targets, and benchmarks for monitoring progress. The Second World Assembly on Ageing and the regional commissions cannot effectively execute future follow-up on the numerous constructive recommendations without clearly outlined and continuous methods for implementation, monitoring, review and appraisal.

AARP expects that the forty-first session of the Commission for Social Development will fulfil its mandate set by the Member States in the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/93). Together, the Plan and the report of the Secretary-General ask the Commission to commence discussions on integration of population ageing in its work, as well as modalities for review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action.

Increased life expectancy over the past century represents a remarkable success story; nevertheless, global ageing poses challenges. AARP believes these challenges to income security, health and long-term care programmes, are manageable. National and international cooperation can achieve success in overcoming these obstacles through means, including partnerships and strategies among Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector and forums such as these. We look forward to the establishment of the newly appointed focal points on ageing throughout the United Nations system and Member States in order to collaborate more effectively towards strengthening the outcomes of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, 2002.

AARP urges the Commission for Social Development to recognize the need and urgency for timely follow-up to the Second World Assembly, which includes specific implementation methods, monitoring and data assessment in order to advance the global ageing agenda and fulfil the recommendations adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: "National and international cooperation for social development"

Statement submitted by International Movement ATD Fourth World, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

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The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

All around the world, men, women, and children whose very lives have been frayed by the great injustice of poverty voice the following challenge: "We want to be part of the future, but our efforts and our courage lead to nothing. History passes us by, leaving us behind."

Social development, for all and by all, is still an unfulfilled objective. However, with the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen in 1995, and subsequent events, the fight against poverty has emerged as a priority for the international community. The 1995 Declaration[1] is ambitious as it calls for:

> "all men and women, especially those living in poverty, [to] exercise the rights, utilize the resources and share the responsibilities that enable them to lead satisfying lives and to contribute to the well-being of their families, their communities and humankind."

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

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[1] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, para. 9.

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This ambitious appeal must be the driving force behind the "new partnership" that was called for by the Governments present at Monterrey in 2002. To guarantee the success of this "new partnership", there must be mutual respect among all countries that subscribe to this idea. Yet international cooperation needs to be inspired by another form of partnership — a partnership within each country, between decision-makers and very poor populations. Without such partnerships in all regions, north and south, east and west, international cooperation will fail.

It is important to highlight that many local development initiatives are already under way that engage people living in poverty. Such initiatives are run by courageous people, because giving priority to the poorest is just as challenging on the local level as on any broader level. However, the late Fr. Joseph Wresinski, founder of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, warned that working solely at a grass-roots level is equally as dangerous for poor populations as working solely at an international level. He argued that whenever the future is being planned, if the poorest people are not part of the conversation at the outset, they will have no place later on when changes are implemented.

Let's be honest: neither our societies-at-large nor their poorest members are in the habit of dialoguing with each other. It's rare that a society puts effort into trying to understand the thinking of people who have no formal training to express what life has taught them. While they have learned about paths out of poverty, their very exclusion has also taught them a broader vision for the future of humanity, one we all need.

This is not to say that people living in poverty are completely absent from all discussion, research or initiatives. However, it is one thing to talk about people living in poverty, and quite another thing to engage in dialogue with them.

It is equally as infrequent and difficult for people living in poverty to have the confidence in themselves to get involved in the development of communities on the local, national and international levels. It is not enough to invite them to a meeting. They also need to feel at home, and to have others in the room believe that people in poverty are intelligent human beings with valid experience that is vital in shaping the thinking and design of our communities. If the poorest feel that others can become trusted partners, they will dare to look for ways to express what they know.

What are the conditions needed for enabling this meeting of the minds and hearts to take place, and for this new understanding to be a guide for successful international cooperation?

1. The need for direct contact between people living in extreme poverty and the people and organizations who have overall responsibilities for development work: This encounter should be the basis for learning from one another. The experiences, know-how and learning of each partner should raise questions for the other. This will forge a mutual understanding out of which will come a common language and common goals.

Many innovative projects that promote this kind of dialogue with the poorest populations already exist. Often, they have too little support to continue. More support for them is a key to creating links with the most vulnerable people.

2. Recognizing that human rights should be the very foundation for international cooperation: This will guarantee that all people live in dignity — the

ultimate goal of development. But we must be wary of creating a hierarchy of human rights, as one homeless man living in the central train station in a major European city illustrates: "Just because we survive by scavenging in garbage cans does not mean that we are rats." In emergencies, the thinking is that people will be grateful for a minimum and that the rest of their rights can be considered later. But being kept alive is not the same as leading "satisfying lives" and contributing "to the well-being of their families, their communities and humankind", as the Copenhagen Declaration says. Our ambition is that each person, not just some of the people, have the means to contribute to their community.

3. Creating new opportunities to break out of the identities of the developers and the to-be-developed: To break these boundaries requires creating forums where everyone can openly think about and question themselves and others about their values, whether cultural, philosophical or spiritual. Through these forums, each person — whatever their position in society, and no matter what their region — can contribute to a shared vision of humanity, where all people are accepted and listened to as equals.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: modalities for review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

Statement submitted by the International Federation of Associations of the Elderly, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

Preamble

The International Federation of Associations of the Elderly (FIAPA) would like to thank the Economic and Social Council for taking account of some of its proposals in what the Council adopted in plenary meeting. These proposals concerned the protection of vulnerable persons (older persons, women and children) in areas of conflict and the protection of older women, particularly in rural areas.

FIAPA is actively involved in a UNESCO committee on new information and communication technologies, and will make proposals when the committee meets on 21 and 22 February 2003 in Geneva. FIAPA intends to develop the subject introduced early this year in its English and French publication on older persons and new technologies. That was the first stage of a study on the information society,

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

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which should act as a bridge between generations.

Free copies of the publication were sent to the 140 embassies in Paris, where FIAPA is based. Other copies (in French and English) are available on request.

FIAPA congratulates the United Nations on setting up an action programme on the new information and communications technologies.

However, FIAPA would like to go further in the field of information, in accordance with the Madrid International Plan of Action adopted by the World Assembly on Ageing. FIAPA considers that it is now vital to have available the means necessary to monitor the implementation of recommendations and decisions made both in Madrid, and at the Regional Assemblies in Shanghai, Berlin and Santiago, Chile.

A motion to this effect was unanimously adopted by the 54 associations (represented by 200 delegates from 30 countries) attending the FIAPA General Assembly in Guadeloupe. The motion recommended that a global monitoring centre for ageing be set up under the auspices of the United Nations to constantly keep track of older people's needs as they develop. The monitoring centre would introduce a system for assessing policy and proposing recommendations and framework regulations to safeguard the fundamental rights of older people, and particularly those most vulnerable.

Paragraph 132 of the "Global monitoring, review and updating" section of the Madrid International Plan of Action provides that the Commission for Social Development will be responsible for follow-up and appraisal of the Plan adopted by the World Assembly on Ageing. Such reviews are critical for effective follow-up to the Assembly, and their modalities should be decided as soon as possible (paras. 116 and 117). Furthermore, a report by the Secretary-General (A/57/93) confirmed that the Commission for Social Development would be the entity responsible for follow-up.

FIAPA proposes setting up regional monitoring centres under the aegis of the United Nations. Such centres would be staffed by experts appointed by the Organization, and would monitor the development of ageing policies to safeguard the fundamental rights of older persons, and particularly of those most vulnerable. International non-governmental organizations would act as intermediaries by circulating information and providing feedback.

At the request of the European Commission, FIAPA and two European organizations (European Platform of Seniors' Organizations (EPSO) and Eurolink Age) set up the European Older People's Platform ("Age") last year in Brussels. It was chaired by FIAPA during its first year. To expand the network, FIAPA has established a European branch in Brussels, a branch in the Indian Ocean (Mauritius), and is about to establish one in West Africa (Senegal). FIAPA also has a permanent representative assigned to the Andean countries with a view to setting up a branch in Quito, Ecuador.

FIAPA's presence in 54 countries (including China, Canada and the Russian Federation) will enable it to assist the Commission in setting up regional monitoring centres, in conjunction with other international organizations.

FIAPA calls for many associations to be involved in this project in order to ensure effective follow-up to ageing policies, as requested by the World Assembly.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

Statement submitted by Caritas Internationalis — International Confederation of Catholic Charities, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and Child Welfare League of America, International Federation of Social Workers, International Kolping Society, World Federation of the Ukrainian Women's Organizations, International Federation for Home Economics, International Council of Psychologists, Center for Migration Studies of New York, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

* * *

In recognition of the International Day of the Family, 15 May 2003, and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2004), we cannot forget that poverty, disease and all forms of violence have a significant negative impact on families.

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

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To reduce poverty, we look to:

- Capital investment in sustainable development
- Development of jobs for men and women
- Universal free primary and secondary education for our children, especially the girl child
- Empower women in the social, economic and political fabric of each nation
- Improvement of preventive health programmes and accessibility to health-care services
- Make sanitation, clean water and food security available to all

To eliminate disease, we must provide trained medical and nursing assistance as well as education to families on basic nutrition and sanitation. We must strive for universal immunization of children against preventable illnesses. We must offer community assistance to develop preventive and treatment measures in curbing the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is devastating families everywhere but especially in the poorest nations of Africa.

Peace and internal stability are the absolute precursors for having quality services for all families. Therefore it is essential that we eliminate all forms of sexual abuse and violence. In addition, women should be part of peacekeeping activities. It is also self-evident that countries involved in armed conflict, internally and externally, having large numbers of displaced people and refugees, are diverting limited tax funds from social needs to arms purchases and support for military forces.

Programmes should be made by local and national Governments to deal with and prevent abuse of substances, including drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

We urge all Governments, private partners and civil society to adhere to their commitments expressed in the Millennium Declaration. These issues should be the primary objective of the Commission for Social Development.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: "National and international cooperation for social development": policies and role of international financial institutions and their effect on national social development strategies

Statement submitted by International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Elizabeth Seton Foundation, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, a non-governmental organization on the roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

* * *

Working towards achieving the millennium development goals and the eradication of poverty calls for a greater commitment of all United Nations

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

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Members and peoples. The policies of the international financial institutions have a huge impact on national social development strategies.

We recommend that the international financial institutions use as first principles for national social development strategies:

1. **That all stakeholders (Governments, project recipients, experts inside and outside of the country, development partners and non-governmental organizations be involved at every stage of development.[1] (We expect that the principle of gender equality will be in place.)**

Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in presentations at the United Nations recently have remarked that projects work best when all sectors work together. The peoples of the country know what they need and what is acceptable in their culture. They are the primary experts to be consulted. Much time, effort and money are lost by the exclusion of this group. Participation by all concerned was confirmed in the Monterrey Consensus.

Two ethical/moral principles that we suggest are "subsidiarity" (decisions are made by those whose lives are affected) and "preferential option for the poor" (all economic decisions are based upon how they affect the lives of the poor).

2. **That the international financial institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund) change the current standards for deciding debt sustainability. The ability of a government to fully fund human development needs must come first in order to eradicate poverty and achieve the millennium development goals.[2]**

Pro-poor growth and access to basic social rights need to advance together.[3] Draconian measures and plans are unacceptable when they create greater poverty. "Safety nets" for the vulnerable need to be in place prior to any structural adjustments. The neo-liberal model has not been proven to work for all economies. Each Government, we believe, has a moral/ethical duty first to care for its own people.

Remember paragraph 60 of the Monterrey Consensus (see A/CONF.198/11, chap. I, resolution 1, annex) promising, "international debt workout mechanism ... that will engage debtors and creditors to come together to restructure unsustainable debts in a timely and efficient manner". Instead of the IMF "Sovereign Debt Restructuring Mechanism (SDRM)" we are asking for the "fair and transparent arbitration procedure".

3. **That all manner of data in national social development projects be transparent/accessible to all publics at each step of the process (design, planning, preparation, execution, monitoring and evaluation).**

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[1] Development Committee, "Joint Ministerial Committee of the Boards of Governors of the Bank and the Fund on the Transfer of Real Resources to Developing Countries", 28 September 2002.

[2] "Communiqué of the International Monetary and Financial Committee of the Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund", Press Release No. 01/45, 28 September 2002.

[3] "Growth is necessary but not sufficient to reduce poverty", United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 19 November 2002.

We agree with the conclusions on "A User's Guide to Poverty and Social Impact Analysis" by Kathleen Selvaggio of Catholic Relief Services.[4] Only when the facts are transparent and openly available to the general public can the best possible decision be made for the "common good".

Monitoring of the millennium development goals will be more accessible and clearer in the projects/directions chosen by those involved when transparency is total.

4. **That there be a new vision, a global agreement to restore policy autonomy to Governments, subordinate the market to priorities set by elected democratic Governments, and accountable international institutions. We would like to re-emphasize the three pillars: social, political and environmental relations.**[5]

A systemic change is needed in the current model and functioning of international financial institutions which diverts profits and capital flows to transnational corporations and developed countries while leaving developing countries, particularly marginalized groups within those countries, to suffer the environmental and human costs.

There should be flows of capital going from the rich countries to poor countries, not from the poor countries to rich countries ... this is just the reverse of what we would normally think of an equitable system.[6]

5. **That there be total debt cancellation of poor countries.**

The HIPC Initiative I and II have not helped many of the indebted countries. Servicing of debt is seriously affecting the economic and social policies of many countries in the South. The debt relief movement calls for a fundamental change in the power relations between debtors and creditors and active involvement of the people affected by a participatory and democratic process in arriving at a viable and sustainable programme, both for total debt cancellation and debt servicing.

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[4] "Comments on A User's Guide to Poverty and Social Impact Analysis" (Draft edition), October 2002.

[5] Ms. Ann Pettifor, 1 November 2002 panel "Managing Globalization", Second and Third Committees of the United Nations General Assembly.

[6] Prof. Joseph Stiglitz, 20 February 2002 as quoted by Ann Pettifor on 1 November 2002.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: Priority theme: "National and international cooperation for social development": sharing of experiences and practices in social development

International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centres and International Movement ATD Fourth World, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Dominican Leadership Conference, Elizabeth Seton Federation, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, School Sisters of Notre Dame and Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, a non-governmental organization on the roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

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Sharing of experiences and practices in social development

Importance of sharing experiences and practices

As non-governmental organizations (NGOs) whose members are international social service providers, we affirm the importance of the theme "Sharing of experiences and practices in social development". Our members live among persons struggling daily to attain a dignified level of social development. We urge the members of the Commission for Social Development at the forty-first session to strengthen and enhance the capacity of the United Nations to draw from experiences and practices, not only of expert academics and researchers, but also from the experiences and practices of those NGOs who work daily to offset the dehumanizing consequences of poverty, racism, ecological degradation, gender discrimination, and non-inclusive economic policies. We urge the United Nations to learn from the direct shared experiences of persons who have been the victims of inadequate development policies.

United Nations history of sharing best practices

The 1995 Copenhagen Programme of Action highlighted the specific nature of social ills affecting the world and called for cooperation and coordination in practices that alleviate social evils: "*The goals and objectives of social development require continuous efforts to reduce and eliminate major sources of social distress and instability for the family and for society. We pledge to place particular focus on and give priority attention to the fight against the world-wide conditions that pose severe threats to the health, safety, peace, security and well-being of our people ... To this end, coordination and cooperation at the national level and especially at the regional and international levels should be further strengthened.*" (See A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, para. 20.)

Likewise, the millennium development goals of the United Nations are so specifically stated that they ask for urgent and concrete actions towards their fulfilment. The millennium development goals call for real partnerships on a practical level in order to: "*Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Reduce child mortality; Improve maternal health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Ensure environmental sustainability; Develop a global partnership for development*" (see A/56/326).

Most recently, the Monterrey Consensus opted "*to eradicate poverty, achieve sustained economic growth and promote sustainable development as we advance to a fully inclusive and equitable global economic system*". (See A/CONF.198/11, chap. I, resolution 1, annex, chap. I, para. 1.) To reach this goal, the Monterrey document reiterates dozens of times the importance of the principle of cooperation.

The reality

Despite the rhetoric and all the good intentions, many grass-roots NGOs experience isolation from the direction of national Governments. Indeed, some even observe that their social development work is done at odds with their own

Government. World conferences and United Nations documents seem distant realities in the lives of people whose daily struggles for food and human dignity are lifelong harsh facts, not some statistics for study. Many NGOs are unaware of their Government's desire to partner with them and share their expertise. On the contrary, some note that ongoing political considerations or macroeconomic policies marginalize their very efforts towards social integration and poverty eradication, especially in the realm of women and children. A poignant example of this is the increased phenomena of trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, despite all the attention this topic has received from United Nations resolutions and national policies. We are hopeful that the Commission for Social Development will encourage sharing the experiences of NGOs to change this reality.

Benefits of sharing best practices

Many initiatives, often referred to as "best practices", have been introduced by governmental programmes and NGOs throughout the world. Successful principles, activities, and methodologies of effective implementations ought to be cooperatively shared. It has been observed that when practitioners in the field communicate their expertise, experience and know-how, grass-roots organizations gain from their knowledge.

Members of the NGO Committee on Social Development, through the Subcommittee on Poverty Eradication, are gathering a collection of best practices from their networks across the world. The initiators of this project intend to diffuse the most successful projects through printed and/or electronic means because they believe this will have positive spin-offs. Creative ideas from one project, if shared, may spark innovative approaches applicable in other places.

Best practices should therefore be shared and diffused because they:

1. Promote the use of creative, successful and sustainable solutions, often generated by the people from the area, to resolve problems of poverty and social exclusion.

2. Serve as valuable sources of information for individuals or groups in the process of planning new projects, accessing funding, drafting policy guidelines, etc.

3. Demonstrate the empowering effect within communities when members are involved in the search for solutions to their own problems using local human and material resources.

4. Provide concrete examples that bridge the gaps between researchers and policy makers.

5. Inform Governments, agencies, NGOs, civic leaders, etc., on current needs and further efforts required to scale-up interventions and draft flexible policy guidelines.

6. Showcase the hard work and effective learning achieved through trial and error by grass-roots people affected by poverty.

7. Provide clear and practical indicators of the success or failure of proposals and recommendations put forth by policy makers and Governments.

8. Act as a reality check for bureaucrats, academics and politicians, and encourage them to listen to the voice of citizens who are affected by their policies.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Commission for Social Development urge Governments to:

1. Establish a comprehensive and easily accessible database of information on best practices and lessons learned. Many examples of these have been gathered nationally and internationally by Governments and by NGOs. They need to be made readily accessible as a coherent body of knowledge. The acquired wisdom and effective methodologies of service providers need to be shared widely within the international, national and local communities.

2. Renew efforts to form partnership with NGOs. Many small and underfunded NGOs have great expertise and credibility with people who have suffered poverty and neglect. Their experience can be collected and classified for wide dissemination. Through more effective partnerships, Governments can ensure that resources are well used, and can thus enhance their own reputation in building strong societies of inclusion and democracy.

3. Ask their own departments or ministries to include the specific experiences of NGOs in all reports where such practices are applicable.

4. Include in future governmental policy and decision-making teams, members who have not benefited from current policies or who can point out where difficulties lie in translating theory into practice. These persons can bring innovative and creative solutions.

Conclusion

The United Nations has traditionally encouraged cooperation between all segments of society. Significant benefits can be derived from sharing experiences within Governments and between all levels of civil society. Easy access to the information reported in "best practices" will stimulate groups to replicate the achievements of other developmental partners, facilitate the planning of successful new projects, give visibility to grass-roots groups and inform Governments on ways to improve the socio-economic status of their citizens. The Commission for Social Development should take the lead in promoting the sharing of best practices and the lessons learned in poverty eradication.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: Priority theme: "National and international cooperation for social development": impact of employment strategies on social development

Statement submitted by Franciscans International and International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, Elizabeth Seton Federation, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, School Sisters of Notre Dame and Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

* * *

The above-mentioned non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as members of the NGO Committee for Social Development, would like to comment on the recommendations for employment strategies to achieve the millennium development goal with specific reference to International Labour Organization Conventions and indicators.

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

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1. Introduction

If sustainable economic and social development strategies for lifting people out of poverty and reversing environmental degradation are to succeed, what happens in the workplace is of critical importance. It is through work accomplished in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity that women and men of former times rose out of poverty, earned a decent living, and contributed to the development of their societies. It is the conviction of many today that work is still one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty and develop societies. Work that pays a fair sustainable wage, honours the worker and protects the environment is one of the key ways of realizing the purpose of the millennium development goals.

Background and history

Governments around the world are careful not to seem to ignore workers' rights. They champion workers' rights and democracy. They state that certain rights are non-negotiable and fundamental. National and global companies, too, parade their "corporate social responsibility" to their customers, shareholders, and even to their employees. Yet, despite this public recognition, Governments and employers still violate fundamental workers' rights.

Section 1, paragraph 5 of the Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) states:

> We believe the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's peoples. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed ... These efforts must include policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition and are formulated and implemented with their effective participation.

Effective participation includes not only Governments, but corporations, employers and employees working in relationship to achieve the economic, social and environmental balance needed to balance the triple bottom line in today's globalized world.

According to the United Nations itself, an estimated 4 million people a year are traded against their will to work in some form of servitude (although there is no longer any State which recognizes any claim by a person to "a right of property" over another).

Against this disastrous and growing trend there is the long, admirable history of the International Labour Organization (ILO) efforts, expressed in Labour Conventions, on behalf of workers the world over:

1930, No. 29 Forced or Compulsory Labour

1948, No. 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize

1949, No. 98 The Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining

1951, No. 100 Equal Remuneration for Work of Equal Value

1957, No. 105 Abolition of Forced Labour

1958, No. 111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)

1973, No. 138 Minimum Age for Employment

1999, No. 182 Worst Forms of Child Labour

The majority of Governments have officially accepted many of these core labour standards.

2. Recommendations for employment strategies to achieve the millennium goal (see A/56/326):

To halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's population whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water

In an effort to reach the first millennium goal, we recommend that the ILO standards form the basis for the formulation of employment strategies that will ensure development that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

(a) Economic: Sustainable minimum wages are necessary for every worker

Sustainable minimum wages are necessary for men, women and youth who work either in the formal sector or the informal sector of the economy. A legal minimum wage set by a government is the least a company/employer can pay without violating the law of the country. Most minimum wage standards have a negative effect on workers and do not provide for the necessities of life. Recent studies have shown that housing needs, health needs and nutritional standards were not met by the minimum wage scale as constituted.[1]

A sustainable minimum wage, on the other hand, would guarantee that a worker's costs for food, shelter, health care, and other necessities would be met in the locality in which s/he lives. There is no law against an employer paying more than the required minimum wage. Employers could take the high road to development by paying good wages and benefits and investing in training of workers.[2]

According to ILO statistics published in 1999, employment in the informal sectors of 17 developing countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia accounts for more than 50 per cent of the total employment. In many other countries no data are even available to determine the contribution of the informal sector.[3] In any case, the sustainable minimum wage recommendation would not affect these workers. However, we believe that workers in this sector also have a right to expect the same security from their wages as those who belong to the formal sector.

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[1] Making the Invisible, Visible: A Study of the Purchasing Power of Maquila Workers in Mexico — 2000, A Research Project of CREA: Center for Reflection, Education and Action, Inc.

[2] Talking Points, "Suggested Responses to Common Questions about Sustainable Living Wage". 10 September 2001, David Schilling Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) Staff.

[3] http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/kilm/killm07.htm.

As the ILO states, "The phenomenal growth of the informal economy during the past three decades poses a major challenge for the ILO's decent work agenda. The development of skills and knowledge is undeniably a major instrument for promoting decent work in the informal economy."[4] Human resource development is of extreme importance. Education and training are major instruments to improve socio-economic conditions and prevent social exclusion. Training in the informal sector should aim at improving not only enterprise performance but also workers' employability and transform survival activities into decent work. In addition, we believe that Governments should establish programmes to provide a safety net for workers in the informal sector similar to that proposed through sustainable minimum wage in the formal sector.

We further recommend that all countries begin to gather and publish data on the informal sector by gender and age cohorts in all countries. These data should be part of the measures employed in determining the extent to which the millennium development goal pertaining to poverty has been achieved.

(b) Social: Alleviate human trafficking/amend immigration policies

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 stated in article 1,

> "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Brotherhood, not servanthood or slavehood was the word chosen by the drafters of the Declaration more than half a century ago. It is noteworthy that three of the ILO conventions listed above relate to the issue of slavery, forced labour and trafficking in 1930, 1957 and 1999, respectively. The attitude of building the empire with the labour of slaves or the poor or the immigrant need not persist into the twenty-first century.

A new sense of solidarity as members of the human family needs to be nurtured. In paragraph 6 of the Millennium Declaration, the fundamental value of solidarity is upheld:

> Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most.

The UNDP *Human Development Report 2002* found that, "The richest 5 per cent of the world's people have incomes 114 times those of the poorest 5 per cent."

Persons who are trafficked for labour are exploited in both wage and work conditions. Those trafficked for the exploitation of prostitution (mostly women and girls), face multiple forms of human rights violations. That sexual exploitation is often grouped as a form of labour exploitation is a denial of the very dignity inherent in work as well as a denial of the harm done to women and girls in prostitution.

In many countries immigrant labour is recruited by employers for agricultural work, meat packing, poultry processing, hotel, restaurant and construction

[4] Ibid.

industries. These are low paying jobs with few, if any benefits. Sometimes local and community charities meet the health, housing and other basic needs of the workers.[5]

In addition to economic difficulties, immigrants or trafficked persons are commonly subjected to harsh immigration laws. Immigration laws need to be developed to allow safe legal entry for workers. Trafficked persons should not be subjected to punitive immigration laws.

New choices can be made in the new century. If sustainable minimum wages are paid in the formal sector, while additional human resource development takes place within the informal sector and public sector support provides a safety net for those in each sector, parents may not be tempted to sell or give their children, their spouses or themselves to persons who traffic in human beings in their efforts to meet their family responsibilities. With flexibility of policy and training of workers, the unemployment rate and the underemployment rates can be diminished. Families will not have to be broken up when a parent or child risks the dangers of migration and tough employment standards outside the country to help the family to survive in the home country.

(c) Environmental: Balance environmental factors

The view of planet Earth from space helps us to understand more fully that there are no boundaries drawn on the planet and indeed we are one people existing together on one planet. Because of our decades of "development" and consumption of earth's resources, paragraph 6 of the Millennium Declaration sets as a value respect for nature.

> Prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development ... The current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants.

The availability of water is an integral part of the millennium goals set out for 2015. In fact, it is conjunctive with issues of income and hunger. The *Human Development Report 2002*, states that "20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with more than half of the region's people, are poorer now than in 1990 — and 23 are poorer than in 1975." Development in this area, as well as development anywhere, if done in a spirit of solidarity and respect for nature, will help to achieve the millennium development goals. In this International Year of Freshwater, 2003, we recommend that corporations evaluate the impact of their operations on local water resources, and assure the access to water for the people in the surrounding community now and into the future, in the light of the 2015 millennium development goal.

3. Conclusion

Employment strategies based on the interconnectedness and interdependence of economic, social and environmental issues will result in sustainable development for all citizens on a single planet. We believe that attention to the triple bottom line by Governments, employers and employees in dialogue can significantly enhance social development over the medium and long term.

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[5] Donald Kerwin, "Crossing the Border" in: *America*, 9 December 2002, pp. 12-13.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: modalities for review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, the International Federation on Ageing and Soroptomist International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants, the International Longevity Center and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and the International Association of the Third Age Universities and the World Union for Progressive Judaism, non-governmental organizations on the Roster of the Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

* * *

* E/CN.5/2003/1.

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A call to action

Introduction

We commend the States Members of the United Nations for convening the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in April 2002, and for the subsequent adoption of a new international plan of action on ageing and Political Declaration[1] that accompanies it. We are also pleased to note the successful regional follow-up meetings, each with a strategy for furthering the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.[2]

The International Federation on Ageing, with the support of the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York, representing more than 50 non-governmental organizations, views the Plan as a valuable blueprint to guide the development of national policies for at least the next decade. However, we are concerned that unless a clear, systematic and accepted process for reviewing progress towards the implementation of the Plan is in place, achieving the fundamental goals of the Second World Assembly on Ageing is in jeopardy.

Implementation

In support of the implementation section of the International Plan of Action, 2002,[3] we call on the Member States participating in the forty-first session of the Commission for Social Development to constructively respond to the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing,[4] particularly taking into account subparagraphs (d), (c) and (b). In those respective subparagraphs, the Secretary-General calls for the strengthening of the programme on ageing of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; for a United Nations system-wide strengthening of focal points on ageing in its functional commissions and specialized agencies, with the programme on ageing serving as coordinator; and for the programme on ageing, through extensive consultations with civil society, academia and organs of the United Nations, to prepare a road map for implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. The NGO Committee on Ageing urges that these structural elements, along with their financial and staffing requirements, be clearly defined and approved during the present session of the Commission in order for implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action to move forward on a timely basis.

Additionally, we ask the Commission for Social Development to address the mandate given to it by the Second World Assembly in the final paragraph of the 2002 Plan.[5] Paragraph 132 specifically delegates to the Commission the responsibility "for follow-up and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan ...". Moreover, the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing[6] states:

> "The Commission for Social Development, as the entity responsible for follow-up and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, should commence discussion on how to integrate the different dimensions of population ageing in its work ... and the modalities of reviews and appraisals at its forty-first session in 2003 ..."

The NGO Committee on Ageing calls upon the Commission to take in hand the tasks involved to fulfil its obligation to implement these action items from the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

Monitoring and follow-up

At this moment, there is no description or outline for a strong follow-up and an effective monitoring process. For us, an effective implementation strategy requires the commitment of an adequately organized and continuous follow-up process with strong elements of monitoring, with systematic assessment and fair evaluation of progress achieved. Part of the follow-up process is regional cooperation, along with the participation of non-governmental organizations, academia, the private sector and older persons themselves. The process of monitoring has to be structured, participative and transparent. It needs to involve all relevant actors at every stage in order to benefit from their resources and their expertise. Monitoring is in itself part of the implementation mechanism as it stimulates all parties concerned to continuously and effectively implement their share in the plan of action and holds them at the same time accountable for what they do and how they do it.

In particular, monitoring will fulfil the following aims:

- **Measure** United Nations system-wide implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, in its agenda
- **Enable** Member States to identify accurately those areas where they can benefit most from mutual support and exchange
- **Provide** age- and gender-disaggregated data gathering, across regions, to provide better evidence to underpin policy-making and stimulate further research
- **Pinpoint and highlight** successful policies and strategies, and provide robust explanations of why policies are effective and how particular outcomes have been achieved

It is also important that monitoring recognize the different points of departure, the various cultures and the available means of each of the countries. Thus, it should promote and measure progress achieved. At the same time, monitoring should provide quality data analysis and assessment, leading to additional knowledge and the identification of best practices in order to initiate and support sound and sustainable policy-making.

More specifically, we propose that, in collaboration with all interested parties, an evaluative method or "report card" on progress towards achieving the over 180 action items in the Plan be developed and administered on a regular basis by Governments, with the participation of civil society and the possibility of a shadow report by non-governmental organizations. For example, two evaluative items might be adapted as follows from paragraphs 48 (a) and 67 (c) of the Plan:

Objective: reduction of **poverty** among older persons

Item to be measured: reduce the proportion of persons living in **extreme poverty** by one half by 2015

Objective: development of policies to **prevent ill-health** among older persons

Item to be measured: ensure that **gender-specific primary prevention** and screening programmes are available and affordable to older persons

Conclusion

Reflecting on the summary found in the opening page of the Secretary-General's report, we call on this session of the Commission to "exercise its responsibility for follow-up and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action". We believe that by undertaking this task, the Commission will support the priority theme for the Commission, "National and international cooperation for social development", as well as addressing the following subtopics: sharing of experiences and practices in social development; social responsibility of the private sector; and impact of employment strategies on social development. The issue of older persons is a clear and major element in each of these topics and therefore must be incorporated in each of the Commission's decisions.

Notes

[1] A/CONF.197/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] Ibid.

[4] A/57/93, para. 33.

[5] A/CONF.197/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[6] A/57/93, para. 33 (a).